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Book Notices.

ZIMMERN'S CONTRIBUTIONS ON THE BABYLONIAN RELIGION.¹

The Babylonians had a religion of their own. And the more important for us still is the fact that they have left for later ages an abundant religious literature. The inherent value of these documents and their fruits available for comparative religion have already turned the energies of a group of Assyriologists to this specific line of study. Among those who have given or are now giving attention to this fruitful field may be mentioned Lenormant, Sayce, Zimmern, Knudtzon, Jensen, Jastrow, Craig, and King. Zimmern's *Babylonische Busspsalmen* gave him an acknowledged place in this field, and was simply the forerunner of more detailed and more specialized investigations.

The first part of this work appeared in 1896 under the title, *Die Beschwörungstafeln Šurpu*, and consisted of 80 pages and 19 autographic plates, with list of deities, glossary, etc. The first half of the second part bears the sub-title, *Ritualtafeln für den Wahrsager, Beschwörer und Sänger*. The Introduction of 15 pages summarizes the material and important results of the investigations of the texts which fill the later pages of this part. The author gives special attention, as the sub-title implies, to the cult of the Babylonians, although the published texts are few and the difficulties of interpretation great. He anticipates the possibility of finding some surprises, some historical connections between the cult of the Babylonians and that of the Israelites, especially as touching the "priest codex."

A classification of the priests and their functions, as revealed in these texts, gives us three classes: (1) the *bārū*-priests, or soothsayers, (2) the *āšipu*-priests, or conjurers, and (3) the *zammāru*-priests, or singers. Traces of the first class can be found as far back as during the third millennium B. C. in the documents of Hammurabi (*ca.* 2200 B. C.). The existence and the functions of this class of religious officials are seen in many of the texts reaching down to the last century of the new Babylonian empire. Their relations to their divinities and to the sacrifices, and their part in uttering oracles have some parallels in the Old Testament.

Likewise the *āšipu*-priests, the conjurers, played an important rôle in the life of the Babylonian people. For the king, the sick, and the troubled he was an essential personage. He was a member of a class, and his office was inherited by his sons down through the ages.

¹ BEITRÄGE ZUR KENNTNISS DER BABYLONISCHEN RELIGION. Von Dr. Heinrich Zimmern, a. o. Professor der semitischen Sprachen in Breslau. Zweite Lieferung, erste Hälfte. [Assyriologische Bibliothek, Band XII.] Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899. 48 Ss. und 19 Tafeln in Autographie. M. 15.

Less is known of the *zammaru*-priests, the singers. But they evidently occupied a part of some importance in the full conduct of the Babylonian religious ritual.

The texts investigated are found beautifully autographed on nineteen lithographed plates. The fragments of small or broken tablets are so pieced together as to give us one long consecutive description of the office, the character, and the function of the *bārū*-priests. The lacunæ often interfere with the discovery of the meaning of a passage, but the general sense, and duplicates in some places, help to bridge over the chasm.

These texts, so well executed, are transliterated and translated over an area of 34 pages. The notes at the bottom of the page explain the origin of the bracketed words inserted to fill out breaks, the reasons for certain readings and translations, and general philological material.

The well-established character of Zimmern's work leads us to put a good measure of confidence in his methods and conclusions.

In our examination of this part of his contribution to Babylonian religion we have noted a few minor errata. On p. 82, note 6), bottom, *S Ū* should be *Š Ū*; p. 86, note 1), *ZA IV* should be *ZA III*; p. 100, l. 53, should we not read *tanaḫḫi(-ki)*? p. 100, note 23), read *Š Ū.BI. ÁŠ.A.AN*; p. 104, l. 120, *abḫal*? p. 118, the number 40 should be dropped one line; p. 121, l. 10, the figure 3 should be 4.

Such valuable collections of religious material as we find here will do much to elevate the religious systems of the Babylonians to a new place among the religions of the ancient oriental world. We await with interest the completion of this notable work.

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THOMPSON'S REPORTS OF THE MAGICIANS AND ASTROLOGERS OF NINEVEH AND BABYLON.¹

These two volumes constitute Vols. VI and VII of Luzac's "Semitic Text and Translation Series," to which E. A. Wallis Budge, the supervising editor of the series, has contributed thus far five volumes of Syriac texts and translations, and Mr. L. W. King three volumes of "The Letters and Inscriptions of Hammurabi," a publication received most favorably by Assyriologists. Thompson's work is thus in very good company, and the publishers are to be congratulated upon securing such scholarly editors and translators, as well as upon bringing out their contributions in such a pleasing dress and handy form. Typographical- and press-work, as well as binding, are done well, and the paper is good and heavy.

¹ THE REPORTS OF THE MAGICIANS AND ASTROLOGERS OF NINEVEH AND BABYLON in the British Museum. The original texts, printed in cuneiform characters, edited with translations, notes, vocabulary, index, and an introduction. By R. Campbell Thompson, B.A. (Cantab.), Assistant in the Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities, British Museum. 2 vols. London: *Luzac and Co.*, 1900. Bound, 25s.—Vol. I, "The Cuneiform Texts." xx pp. (of which pp. ix-xvii are a descriptive list of the astrological reports printed in this volume)+85 plates.—Vol. II, "English Translations, Vocabulary," etc. xcii+147 pp.; i. e., Preface, pp. vii-ix; Contents, p. xi; Introduction, pp. xiii-xxix; Translations, pp. xxxiii-xci; Transliterations, pp. 1-111; Vocabulary, pp. 113-32; Index, pp. 133-44; Lists, pp. 145-7.